

Tennessee, listening, we heard again and again the price of gasoline and diesel at the pump was wiping out any margins of even survival for many farmers and people who rely on our transportation industry.

I do want to call upon the energy industry and the energy sector to be a responsible corporate actor. If not, there is going to be a real focus placed by this Congress because they absolutely must respond appropriately. I mention that because of the reports, people calling in about price gouging and excessive profit taking. If that is occurring anywhere, it absolutely must be reported immediately to the Department of Energy and must be prosecuted to the full extent of the law.

We have asked the Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee to conduct vigorous oversight hearings on what went wrong during those initial days and hours, and what lessons we can learn from this awful tragedy. Most of our response and energy needs to be focused on the victims right now, both their evacuation and responding to their needs, but at the same time that committee will begin their vigorous oversight hearings in an orderly way to collect the appropriate information. Emergency response was unacceptable early on and in many ways I saw it firsthand as a medical volunteer. We have to fix it. Those sorts of things should not happen in America today.

Every issue before us we will be addressing. Again, we are just coming back in. I look forward to doing that. One of the biggest problems on the ground will be the issues surrounding communications, command and control structures, and we will be addressing the longer term issues of housing long term but also temporary housing, and issues such as health coverage and unemployment insurance, getting power back, restoring the ports back to activity, dredging channels for those displaced, and making sure their insurance coverage—if they were so lucky to have insurance—is actually provided to them in a timely way.

Let me close by simply saying I am humbled and inspired by the tremendous generosity of all Americans who have given so much of themselves and their time and their energy over the last several days—and their money—and the resources of compassion. I thank you and I know America thanks you.

We are going to have to continue to invest. We are going to have to continue to pull together. The Senate is rolling up its sleeves. It has done so. We are at work and will work aggressively to respond appropriately.

I am confident that America will be able to meet the challenges that lay ahead. Through all of this, we will be made stronger and better and more unified and more hopeful as we pull together as a government and as a people in this time of crisis. The American people are leading the way, and to-

gether we will all be able to overcome these challenges.

THE SUPREME COURT

Tomorrow, I will have more to say about Chief Justice Rehnquist and the nomination of Judge Roberts for Chief Justice.

Today, let me briefly say the Senate and the Nation mourn the loss of the Chief, as he was affectionately known by so many of us and known on the Supreme Court. We will all miss Chief Justice Rehnquist—from his brilliant legal mind to his efficient and effective administration of the Supreme Court.

We look forward with confidence as the President's new nominee for Chief Justice, Judge Roberts, is considered. Judge Roberts learned from the best. He was, in fact, a clerk, as we all know, for then-Associate Justice Rehnquist. There is no doubt in my mind that Judge Roberts has the temperament, has the skill, and has the mind to lead the Supreme Court for decades to come.

With that, we have a lot to do. I know the Democratic leader has a statement. Then we will have time this afternoon after our lunches for people to come back and make statements as well.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, it is my understanding the Senate, under the standing order, is to go out of session at 12:30 today. Is that right?

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. That is correct.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent, if my remarks take a little bit longer, that we wait until after my remarks to put the recess.

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

EXPRESSION OF APPRECIATION

Mr. REID. Mr. President, the August recess was memorable for me for several reasons, not the least of which was my first visit to a hospital on my own behalf since I was 8 years old. I am grateful to the physicians who cared and consulted with me. Admiral Eisold, the Physician of the Capitol, is really a national treasure. The Congress is fortunate to have his curative hand over all we do.

While speaking of admirals, I would be remiss not to mention the Senate Chaplain, ADM Barry Black. After my brief hospital visit, my first public appearance in Nevada was at a faith-based summit I had been planning since January. The event turned out extremely well. The highlight of the summit was a presentation of Dr. Black, our Chaplain. I only wish all Americans—Christian, Jewish, Protestant, Mormon, Hindu, and Muslim—could have heard his presentation on faith and on virtue and why America must be a virtuous nation. His remarks were inspiring not only for me but for everyone within the sound of his voice.

I am happy to report that I am well. I feel fine. I have been advised medically that I have no restrictions on my

activities. I am so fortunate to now return to work in a place that I love—the U.S. Senate.

Words cannot adequately express my appreciation for the thoughts and prayers and good wishes that I received from my Senate colleagues and the rest of the Senate family—some of whom are in the Chamber as I speak—and, of course, my friends in Nevada and around the country. I will long remember the cards, letters, phone calls, e-mails, and other expressions of concern. So even though these words are insufficient, I thank you all for your concern for me.

SUPREME COURT NOMINATIONS

Mr. REID. Mr. President, much has happened in the weeks since we adjourned for the August recess. In just the last few days, we have seen tragedy strike the gulf coast and learned that our friend, William Rehnquist, Chief Justice of the United States, had passed. Our thoughts and our prayers are with those struggling to pick up the pieces on the gulf coast following the hurricane. And, of course, our thoughts and prayers are with the Chief Justice's family.

I had the good fortune of working with the Chief on several occasions, the first when I was head of the Democratic Policy Committee. I told my Democratic Senators I was going to ask the Chief Justice to come and talk to us. They said he would never do that. I called him, and he was happy to come. At that lunch, he displayed a great command of the law, of course, a strong commitment to judicial independence, and something that we didn't know existed—a sharp sense of humor. Just a short time later, I got to know him better when he presided over the impeachment trial here in the Senate.

I am grateful to have worked with him, and in addition to have spoken to him on the telephone on several occasions at his office and at his home.

As I have indicated, my condolences are with his family. He will be missed.

Now that the President has said he will nominate Judge Roberts to replace Chief Justice Rehnquist, the Senate's advice and consent responsibility is even more important. If confirmed to this lifetime job, Judge Roberts will be the leader of the third branch of the Federal Government and most prominent judge in our Nation. The Senate must be vigilant in considering this nomination.

I, of course, look forward to consulting with the President on the O'Connor seat which at some time will become vacant when the replacement is chosen. Justice O'Connor, we have heard from this floor and around the country, has been a voice of moderation and reason on the Court, and should be replaced by someone who, like her, embodies fundamental American values of fairness, liberty, and equality.